

SANCTUM

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HEART

THE CITY
BENEATH



Sanctum

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Content warnings: Heart is a horror game, and as such, there are some unpleasant things in the text. These include but are not limited to: violence, drug use, addiction, ghosts, unwanted bodily transformation, and monsters that used to be people. We can assure you that there is no rape or sexual assault in this game.



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INTRODUCTION

An abandoned underground station, rebuilt and reinforced with ramshackle defences to keep the wild creatures of the Heart at bay. A collection of skiffs and barges lashed together that scuds across the oily surface of a subterranean lake. A twisted lighthouse perched on the edge of a cliff, surrounded by pallid, cawing birds and crewed by two desperate families.

The core game of *Heart* assumes that the delvers are going to do just that: delve. *Heart* is primarily a game about pressing on into the unknown in the City Beneath in search of answers – but it doesn't have to be.

In *Sanctum*, we're going to focus on a different style of play: a campaign set around a single central landmark that the players create with help from the GM. We're going to guide you through the process of building a haven and structuring the world around it. Then – and this is the most exciting part – you can smash it to pieces (or try to) with one of four different kinds of angel, the nightmarish and unreal agents of the Heart Itself.

HAVENS

When we say “haven”, we mean “landmark with the **Haven** domain”, which means that it's a stable location within the Heart where people have banded together for the sake of community rather than a single purpose.

There are plenty of places where people live that don't qualify as havens: research stations, guard posts, cult hideouts, treacherous temples, hermitages and so forth.

THE UNFORTUNATE TALE OF GRIS HANNEMANN

Gris Hannemann, a human writer, was famous for his work on pulp periodicals. He purported to be an explorer of some note, and detailed his exploits in sensationalised reports such as *The Lustful She-Gnolls of Nujab*, *The Silver Song of the Ice Nymphs*, *Death*

Drives A Vermissian Carriage and *The Bloodthirsty Automata of Magwan Porth*. When sales of his novellas dried up and his creditors came knocking, he fled to the City Beneath in search of a) inspiration and b) somewhere to hide from the organised crime syndicates that had called in his debts.

He heard of angels while he was in the Heart, and something about them sparked his imagination; he would trek for days on end, often unaccompanied, trying to glimpse one. Half a decade after his first expedition, he returned to Spire a changed man, clutching reams and reams of notes on these uncanny creatures.

He proclaimed to have created a taxonomy of angels, to have drunk their stuttering unreal blood and gleaned insight on the worlds beyond light and shadow from something he called The Convocation. He brokered a deal with his old publisher, who insisted that he sex up the notes a bit, and released the largely unremarked-upon and critically ignored *Beyond the Edge of Madness: A Year in the City Beneath*. The book didn't sell and his creditors tracked him down; his body was found floating in the canal the morning after his barely-attended release party in the Silver Quarter.

The very act of looking upon an angel can drive a man mad. Given the unstable reality of the Heart, it's not clear whether Hannemann actually discovered several entirely new types of angel, or whether he just experienced multiple three-day benders with whatever drugs he could scrape together in the wilderness. Unfortunately for the denizens of the Heart that survived him, it doesn't matter.

The Heart does make monsters to his specifications: better ones, single-purpose creatures, machines of bone and interstitial fluid. No one can remember seeing them before, but accurate memories are a scarce resource in the City Beneath – maybe he was just the first to write it all down.

Hannemann's notes on havens and the more prominent types of angel are spread throughout this book.

GROUP HAVEN CREATION

If you want your players to feel connected to a haven, your best bet is to have them create it themselves. Get together around a table (or a virtual table, if you're playing online) at the beginning of your campaign and lead them through the creation process. We've boiled it down into a series of questions to make it as simple as possible, but don't feel limited by them. You can go into as much depth as you like; just make sure to leave some mysteries to explore through play.

It's important to remember that what you come up with isn't set in stone. You can go back and change it as the idea evolves; for example, maybe you realise that the haven needs the **Warren** domain, or that it's on **Tier 3** rather than **Tier 2**. Feel free to swap things about to make it fit your vision.

HALLOW

All shut doors and shuttered windows, cackles from shadowed alleys, and eyes - always watching, always judging. The disease-riddled witches who run this place seem to think that they have a monopoly on the Convocation, and refuse to answer my questions.

Indeed, they refuse to speak candidly to the uninfected at all, and with bluster and bluff they have cobbled together a cult of fear and worship around themselves. The blood-sickness they share grants them a measure of prophetic power, and it seems there is no shortage of soft-minded cultists ready to throw their lot in with the Witches of Hallow.

Following a disastrous confrontation, I left soon after I arrived. I believe that, as dismissive as they were, they are now tracking me; no doubt they are interested in learning more about my methods and research. It is my understanding that they have the trick of befriending the predatory buildings that exist here. I am sure that the boarded-up dressmaker's shop I have seen repeatedly in four other locations is part of their schemes. I am no fool: I will not attempt to gain access. But I shall torch the place to the ground if they dare interfere with my endeavour.

DOMAINS

What domains does your haven have?

The first consideration when building a haven is what domains you'll attach to it. It will have the Haven domain as a matter of necessity (otherwise it isn't really a haven to begin with), but consider what other domains will influence the haven and pick one or two to give it some flavour. Below are some examples of how each domain might influence a haven.

CURSED: The pub basement has a huge and hungry mouth growing out of the wall, and local kids sneak in and dare one another to stick their hands in it; the Hounds here have made a moat of something which looks (and smells) like stomach acid, with cilia writhing under its surface; there's a large heartsblood enclave within the settlement, and travelling cleavers often visit to pay their respects.

DESOLATE: A forgotten civilisation used this platform to extract something vital from the earth, and now trackless blasted wastes surround it; the settlement is pinned to the walls of a chasm and the people shelter in caves, trying to ignore the rumblings in the dark below; this place used to be a temple, but generations of pilgrims hungry for souvenirs have scraped all the iconography from the walls.

OCCULT: The haven is a school, of sorts - students come here if they want to learn real magic, and some even survive the process; at the centre of the settlement is a shifting brass and iron plinth of enormous complexity which attracts meditative occultists; the haven is an ongoing, centuries-long magic ritual, and few of the inhabitants are sure of its purpose.

RELIGION: Exiled from the Temple of the Moon Beneath, this splinter group (The Dominion of the Sunken Sun) offers succour to travellers along with reams of promotional material; they say an angel of Charnel, blood-caked and glorious, bathes in the waters here and heals the sick; a maddening place where loud bells are rung multiple times a day (and without discernible warning) to celebrate the majesty of a god they can only name through music.

TECHNOLOGY: The haven walks unsteadily on many creaking legs to wherever the council of Engineers (a gnoll, two humans and a ghost) decides it needs to be; the Vermissian Collective built a thinking-engine here out of carefully-harvested consciousnesses, and feed it questions like an oracle; the valves and switches at the centre of this haven allow control of the environment and shape of the settlement, but three rival sects with different editions of the user manual are vying for control.

WARREN: Tradition dictates that the church should be demolished every twenty years and a new one built on its ruins, and now the sub-basements extend over a hundred feet under the earth;

standing up to your full height is bad luck round these parts, so the bent-backed inhabitants build their ceilings low for good fortune; this place is a working mine where teams of excavators chip away at rocks to extract winged, humanoid fossils.

WILD: The houses are built on stilts to keep them out of stinking water that fizzes with luminescent insects; everyone has at least one hearts-blood pet and fewer than the recommended number of fingers; huge and flightless megacorvids croak and lunge around the place in search of food or a sleeping spot, and the inhabitants view them as sacred creatures.



TIER

What tier is your haven on?

Tiers are a rough guide to how close to the Heart Itself (and therefore how weird) your haven is. The deeper you are, the more creative you can become – but the harder you will have to work to retain a sense of humanity. For example, if your inhabitants are all songs trapped in jars, you might struggle to get the players to connect with them on a personal level.

TIER 1

Located on the outskirts of Derelictus, these havens still follow most rules of space and time. There aren't any weird portals to otherworlds, the walls are mainly made out of wall rather than meat or intelligent crystal and the people basically look like people. Generally these places don't rely on magic or weird technology to stay intact, so they look like real-world underground structures.

Tier 1 landmarks are safer than deeper places, but they usually end up controlled by one or more existing power structures (e.g. the Vermissian Collective, the Hounds or the Church of the Moon Beneath). This can upset the inhabitants if they'd rather go their own way.

TIER 2

These landmarks have something definitely weird about them. Maybe gravity doesn't work right, or the streets keep rearranging themselves when no-one's looking or ghosts walk alongside the living. The inhabitants are similarly weird, having deliberately or accidentally severed themselves from normal society.

Tier 2 is significantly more dangerous than Tier 1, so most havens at this level are carefully guarded. Walls, gates and defences are commonplace, and Hounds will take an active role in protecting the populace rather than trying to keep society on an even keel as they do on Tier 1. The folk who live here are suitably suspicious of outsiders, but if you can prove (or fake) your trustworthiness, most will be keen to sell you a hot meal and trade stories.

TIER 3

Get as weird as you like. You don't have to worry about making sense any more. Seas, woodland, alien skies, enormous pulsating organs, frozen caverns, cursed burial chambers of otherworldly sorcerer-kings, ghosts of entire settlements haunting other settlements; if you can make it fit the overall theme of Heart, go for it.

Havens at this depth are much rarer. It's hard to maintain any kind of stability, and doubly so if you're trying to support a community. Any permanent landmark you find will have a trick of keeping itself intact, whether that's a unique method of living, bargains with otherworldly entities, advanced (if not entirely understood) technology or changing their bodies to suit the environment.

TIER 4

The Heart Itself. There are no havens here...or maybe it's one big haven! That's up to you. (The latter is unlikely, though.)

ROGUE

If you want to have a mobile haven that can move between tiers, giving it the Rogue tag lets you put it wherever you want whenever it's narratively appropriate. Make sure that moving it is difficult, though. Give it some unusual requirements to get it started, make it need protection as it shifts between tiers or have elders in charge who need to be persuaded to move it at all.

FRACTURE

Fractures are extra-dimensional snickets that exist parallel to the standard plane of reality. They can be accessed from multiple locations, via ritual or through multiple specially-prepared portals. Fractures allow you to get creative with the makeup of the haven, but they're hard to reach without trouble. Plus, their inherently strange nature means that they often lack something concrete for player characters to connect with, so be careful when building them.

SOMETHING UNIQUE

What's special about the haven?

Something marks your haven out as unusual: a rule it breaks (whether scientific or societal), a god they worship, a special resource, some other defining mark. You'll notice that in the havens detailed in the core book, each of them has one (or more) twists or changes that mark it out from the others – something big, usually visible from the outside, rather than just having different people in it.

Be bold. Heart gives you a lot of room to experiment and make something interesting; even the place where you go to rest your head and knock back some malak should have something remarkable about it.

Also: don't be afraid to change the world around the haven itself. The Heart that your players will adventure through is yours and yours alone, and it can (and should) be different from the one in the core rulebook. For instance, we imply that there are multiple structures devoted to the Deep Apiarists in the City Beneath, but maybe in your game they're only allowed to operate in your haven. We don't have any megafauna or walking villages by

default, but maybe your haven is built on the back of a giant beetle that ambles between tiers on its own inscrutable schedule.

EXAMPLES:

The haven is grown from the flesh and blood of a single creature (which possibly used to be human) in a basement. The creature is pleasant enough to talk to, but it has its own agenda separate from the people who run the place.

The haven only exists in our world during performances of an aelfir song. Not everyone knows this and it sometimes appears by accident, blending into Derelictus cabaret bars or juddering into view at a drunken campfire sing-song.

The haven is a library and a graveyard at the same time: people are buried here and slowly become books detailing their lives.

The haven is obsessed with rebuilding an original Vermissian carriage and starting it up again.

The haven worships the enormous toad-god Plür, and feeds items with magical resonance to his statue in the town square in exchange for divine protection.

Twice a year, the haven feed one "lucky" inhabitant to the colossal carrion-pig buried underneath the town square. In exchange, the pig lets them slit open its belly and pull out armfuls of uncanny guts which they use to predict the future (as long as they put them back and suture the wound afterwards).

Centuries of reliquary catacombs built on top of one another have collapsed, leaving the haven full of the jumbled bones of saints; on occasion, they animate into a hideous gestalt.

The haven is built around an ever-burning candle in a circle of salt: the first ward established against the Heart. If the circle of salt is ever broken, the haven will fall.

The haven is run by cannibals who treat non-cannibals as inferior citizens, and on occasion induct a new member into their congregation with a lavish feast consisting of an unpopular community member.

GRIP STATION

The sages of the Vermissian are a strange lot; they are obsessed with what might be, rather than what is. They devote their existence to a single-minded pursuit of the possible, wandering this unreal network in search of – well, not answers, but certainly questions.

Being around them for any length of time is exhausting. For a while, they believed me a simpleton and were happy enough to ignore me (and overcharge me for uncomfortable but broadly quiet lodgings). Then one of them saw my notes, and obviously began to view me as an intellectual equal.

He spoke at length about the different "facets" of the Vermissian: all of its potential futures and alternate pasts, which are accessible through dimensional turntables. He spoke of a reality, fragile as spun glass, where the Incident did not occur and the trains actually work; a land of the dead where spectres are ferried to their afterlives by incorporeal engines; wild and lawless wastelands where mad machine-cultists carve out empires and harvest rival sects for parts.

But why seek the unreal and barely-existent when what is already here, crimson and glorious, is so fascinating?

FACES

Who else is here?

A haven can have anywhere between a handful of people to hundreds of inhabitants, many of them temporary, such as the Temple of the Moon Beneath and the surrounding areas on Tier 1. However, you don't have to detail everyone that lives there – far from it. Think in terms of groups, and put a face to each one.

A face is a representative of a movement, faction or idea within the haven. When the player characters interact with them, they're interacting with the group they belong to as a whole. You don't need to limit yourself to a single face per organisation, but given the scope of Heart campaigns (and how the rules are for modelling perilous expeditions into the unknown rather than small-town politics) one should do just fine.

Give players the option to be connected to these groups. Not everyone has to be best mates with the hard-bitten aunty who runs the settlement, but if one or two players know her (or were raised by her after their parents died) it helps bind the story together.

NON-NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The roles described in this section don't have to be filled by non-player characters; there's plenty of opportunity for PCs to take them on instead. It's likely that the sort of motivated individual who becomes a delver would rise to prominence in a community. It also makes for a good story for the player characters to be directly rather than tangentially responsible for the haven's prosperity or downfall.

WHO'S SUPPORTING THE STATUS QUO?

Every haven (even if they don't want to admit it) has a caretaker. They're responsible for all major decisions and take the blame when things go wrong, whether they earned their position through years of trust and hard work, underhanded dealings or dumb luck. These folk are generally in way over their heads and struggling to keep things going, so they often want to keep things the way they are – even if that's dangerous or inefficient.

Why is maintaining the status quo important to this person? Who helps them maintain control? What do they lose if things change?

WHO WANTS TO SHAKE THINGS UP?

All communities have a rebel. This face feels that it's important to change the haven for the better, but is opposed by those already in control. They have a lot of work for delvers, but given their lack of resources, they often resort to persuading the player characters to undertake work on philosophical rather than monetary grounds – or by offering them a stake in the haven once they're in charge.

What does this person want to change? Who's with them? What obstacles are in their path and how could the player characters help?

WHO REPRESENTS THE PEOPLE AT LARGE?

There's probably a trade, faith or common goal that unites the populace. This face – the voice – represents that idea. Although the rebel and the ruler have authority, real power can only be sustained if the voice's people agree with what's going on. When the player characters interact with the voice, they're interacting with the settlement as a whole. The voice will change to represent what's happening with the populace. If the community sustained an attack, the voice will be wounded; if the community is starving, they'll be gaunt and malnourished; if the people are celebrating, they'll be drunk and singing.

What do the ordinary people in the haven do? What do they need from the player characters – and what can they offer in return?

ART

How do people change the way the haven looks, feels, sounds, tastes and smells?

Art is everywhere in the City Beneath. The inhabitants create it obsessively as they attempt to understand the alien world around them, and your haven will be no different. What sort of art, craft or entertainment do they make, and how does it reflect the state of the haven?

EXAMPLES:

Black-comedy plays about legendary villains and beasts of the City Beneath.

Community songs with a repeating refrain that everyone adds verses to; if someone teaches you their verse, it's seen as an honour to sing it.

Brightly-painted architecture in garish, clashing patterns designed to upset the viewer.

Axe-dancing, which is like sword-dancing but slightly more dangerous due to the wild swinging.

Semi-improvised plays where a set of stock characters tackle the challenges of the Heart; most die before the end of the performance.

Fiercely-guarded graffiti spots where inhabitants list their achievements and prowess (as fighters, occultists, priests, lovers, etc.) in increasingly large and complex fonts.

Catching a wild beast, adorning it with streamers and letting it run wild while several champions attempt to bring it down using only punching daggers.

Elaborate portraits of Damnou, the drow moon-goddess, in triptych; your portrait is seen as an expression of your faith, and people will spend comparatively huge sums of money on pigments and ornamentation.

Getting fall-down drunk and trying to recite poetry; the longer the poem and the drunker the performer, the more impressive the feat.

Organ meat pâtés flavoured with fearsome liqueurs.

Weaving patchwork coats for people who leave the settlement to become Hounds; the haven has a strong tradition of sending young folk off to join the regiment and keeps a memorial wall for those who die in service.

Creating systems of slang and cant that use complex rules and rhythms to confuse outsiders.

ROLE

What do the player characters have to offer in exchange for being part of the haven?

Player characters are unusual people who are unlikely to live a quiet existence in the City Beneath. Encourage the players to think about and discuss why they're welcome (perhaps grudgingly) in the haven, and why people have chosen to build a community with them. Below are some ideas for roles in settlements broken up by the character classes, but don't feel limited by them.

CLEAVER: Hunting for food or raw materials to turn into supplies; advising on matters of the Heart Itself; protecting a frontier town from wild animals and raiders; guiding travellers through the local area; providing support for other Heartsblood people.

DEADWALKER: Performing funeral rites and disposing of dead bodies; smuggling in supplies via the Grey; acquiring unusual materials from otherworlds; bargaining with the undead; protecting the populace from ghosts and phantoms.

DEEP APIARIST: Beekeeping (regular bees, not the magic ones) for honey and wax; building and maintaining stabilising wards against the Heart Itself; providing medical care; offering a sanctuary for other travelling Deep Apiarists.

HERETIC: Leading religious ceremonies to celebrate, mourn or mark the passing of time; healing

the sick and providing for the needy; spreading the gospel of the Moon Beneath; offering spiritual solace to the lost and directionless.

HOUND: Maintaining defences; training a militia to defend the town; keeping the peace and handling disputes over land or property; rooting out those who act against the haven and punishing them; offering support to travelling Hounds in exchange for service; providing a supply of arms and ammunition.

INCARNADINE: Establishing and maintaining trade networks via Incarnadine shrines; extracting tithes from the populace on behalf of the ruler; managing day-to-day events and overseeing stocks; brokering disagreements between acrimonious parties; tracking down and killing those with a great karmic debt.

JUNK MAGE: Acting as a Town Wizard of sorts, offering advice on the occult; running a magic shop; leading a clueless sect; doing something inscrutable with mystical bulwarks against the Heart Itself.

VERMISSIAN KNIGHT: Protecting people in the haven and outlying areas; leading expeditions on delves to other landmarks; maintaining machinery; navigating the Vermissian, if the settlement is within its boundaries; hunting down big monsters for fame and profit.

WITCH: Lending the haven an air of legitimacy due to their noble bloodlines; using scrying magic to gather useful information; offering medical care via surgery or potions; leading the Witch cult in worship.

HIGH RISE

Plagued by legions of spectral undead, the inhabitants of High Rise have decided to fight the problem with sacrifice - to fight ghosts with ghosts, as it were.

The settlement perches atop several twenty-storey buildings strung together with rickety bridges; from the seventeenth floor downwards, the phantoms are too many and too hungry to allow habitation. Something is keeping them from ascending to the upper levels.

The priests of High Rise (who call themselves the Swanfall cult, though I doubt that any of them have seen a swan) believe that frequent sacrifices of their best and brightest youths is the key to protecting their homes. Every month or so, a handful of people leap headlong from the roofs to crush themselves to pulp below. This is a great honour, and they seem happy enough about it, so I am loath to criticise them. Many fools have done far worse things in pursuit of glory.

THREATS

What threats does the haven face?

The Heart is a dangerous place, and one of the reasons for forming a haven is mutual protection. Building a wall theoretically gives you an area that you can lay control and develop, but the reality of life in the City Beneath means that this isn't always true.

Create at least one threat that looms over the haven by drawing on your haven's domains and unique trait. Here are some ideas for threats, broken down by domain:

CURSED: The deeper a haven is, the more likely it is that the Heart will rise up and reclaim the land as its own; everyone's heard of a haven collapsing wholesale into the ground as the City Beneath consumes it. Angels are a rare threat (most people will never even hear an eye-witness account of one) but they represent one of the direst challenges that a haven can face: the Heart Itself dispatching a fell-handed and untouchable agent to act in its service. The last section of this book details four specialised kinds of angels you can pit against your players, if you would like to.

DESOLATE: Mushroom farms become barren.

Beasts farmed for meat such as pigs, eating-owls or deep-crabs catch diseases and wither away. Viruses spread unchecked through, and between, villages. Unfavourable pulses twist the Heart into arid wastelands, and given that travel between settlements can take days, one bad harvest can ruin a haven.

HAVEN: One of the most common threats to a haven isn't the Heart, but other people: rival havens or isolated pockets of desperate people will try to take what's "theirs". Even within a settlement, disputes over lack of resources or ideological differences can set people against one another – and when you're a mile underground with only mushrooms and hope to survive on, people's irritating habits can really start to get on your nerves.

CLUSTER

I wrote at length earlier in this volume about my fascination with predatory buildings – those structures of wood, metal and stone which are very much alive and hungry. They disguise themselves as normal buildings in an effort to lure in prey.

In Cluster, a Heartsblooded fellow by the name of Sekh Drumford has (like those treacherous witches of Hallow) learned to control them. But unlike the witches, Drumford's relationship with the buildings is not one of master and servant, but predator and prey.

Cluster is a trap for traps. It is built entirely of predatory buildings that were lured there, and then aggressively remodelled – or killed, in other words. Of late, as the settlement has grown, Drumford has begun to farm the structures. Rather than immediately killing each new arrival, he is attempting to twist their growth and movements into something more useful.

I am told there are currently eleven pubs, two tailor's workshops, a boutique perfumery and a small covered marketplace, all roughly sutured together into the shape of a village. Drumford is currently attempting to grow a theatre, and is in need of meat to feed it.

OCCULT: Havens are often built on unstable metaphysical ground: bargains with dark entities, half-understood glyphs tattooed on the wrists of the elders and blood offerings in hidden chambers are the order of the day. Sometimes the wards break down due to lack of maintenance or expertise; other times, rival occultists wish to siphon power, access or resources from a vulnerable haven and begin an arcane war.

RELIGION: Despite the prominence of the Church of the Moon Beneath in the Heart, there are temples to hundreds of other gods – and with deep-seated religious belief comes conflict. Rival sects worshipping other gods (or different forms of the same god) can spur a community to violence and exclusion. More than one haven has fallen due to attacks made in the name of a deity.

TECHNOLOGY: The machinery of the Heart is badly-understood at best, and it can break down at a moment's notice. If a community relies on technological elements to survive, then they also rely on the generosity of those with the skills to repair it and the availability of suitable materials. Retroengineers charge a high price for their expertise, and replacements for broken parts must be scavenged for or painstakingly created. Those in possession of valuable or fascinating devices might find their home under siege from others who wish to possess them.

WARREN: The Heart is riddled with passages and byways; some natural, some made by people. Defending a haven can be nearly impossible due to the twisting, overlapping corridors that surround it. What's more, if construction in the haven is particularly aggressive, the inhabitants could find their homes collapsing under their own weight.

WILD: Beasts, monsters and particularly aggressive terrain are a common problem. The creatures of the Heart range from disturbing to deadly, and they have no respect for town boundaries. As havens expand into their hunting, breeding or child-rearing lands, they will begin to venture inside for food, water and shelter (not that all heartsblood beasts need food, water or shelter as people would understand them). Wild threats can't be bargained with, but they're less cunning and resourceful than people.

RULES

How does the haven function mechanically?

Most of a haven is represented through fictional material rather than game mechanics, but there are a few considerations before the creation process is finished.

Default stress is a rough indication of the level of danger for player characters when occupying the haven. The lower the dice size, the safer things are; a default stress D4 haven will feel very different from a default stress D8 one. A high stress dice isn't necessarily a symptom of chaos or disorder, though: a regimented camp of Hounds might have default stress D10, as any misbehaviour could be immediately met with violent reprisals.

Haunts provide a means for player characters to exchange resources for healing and resupply. Each one has a non-player character, or at the very least an interesting concept, attached to it that the delvers interact with when they remove stress.

Think carefully about which resistances your haven can cater to with regards to your player characters' classes; if they can't access healing at home, they'll need to travel elsewhere to get it. Offering two or three haunts provides you with an opportunity to flesh out the haven with characters and services, but keep the dice size around D6 to encourage the players to improve them (see *Heart* p. 131 for full rules on upgrading haunts). If you have a single haunt, it's often interesting to put it at a high dice size to reflect something really special and worth defending.

Resources are valuable items that can be found in or near the haven. In havens, a lot of resources are owned by the inhabitants, so player characters will have to offer something in return or steal them. The higher-valued and more varied the resources in a haven, the more prosperous it is.

NAME

What's the haven called?

Naming things is hard. We recommend keeping it simple and sticking to a theme. Here are some ideas:

- Pick a foreign language, translate a few important words and swap around a few letters. Mash them together until you're left with just the sound and feel of the phrase.
- Combine two nouns you like the sound of.
- Steal the names of rural villages from the other side of your country.
- Name it after the founder, a legendary heroine or a fateful battle.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

What do you want to find out?

The final part of creating a haven is to work out what questions you want to answer through play. Working out every last detail of the settlement before you start your campaign will make it dry and unexciting to explore; the more details you leave vague, the smoother the game will flow. You can always define things in play, after all.

ADDITIONAL HAVEN QUESTIONS

- Why do people come here?
- Why do people leave?
- What's the best thing about this haven?
- What stories do people tell their children here?
- What kind of animals and vermin are here?
- What's the secret here that they promise never to tell outsiders?

WYRMPIT, AN EXAMPLE HAVEN

DOMAINS

We (Chris and Grant) have a chat through the domains for a bit and settle on **Desolate** as our option – we think it could be interesting to build something that primarily focuses on the land, not the people. That might change, though! We decide that the haven is in a pass in a great ravine that forms one of the only access routes in this part of the Heart, and all around it the land is scarred and dead from generations of battles. Chris suggests that the place is built on an old crumbling temple; Grant agrees and reckons that there's something big and dangerous slumbering underneath there.

TIER

The haven provides a passage between Tiers 1 and 2.

UNIQUE THING

What is slumbering under there? We talk about guardians to the underworld for a bit and throw out the idea of a three-headed dog (overplayed) before landing on the solution: a giant wyrm! We can't quite decide if it's annelid or reptilian, but it's definitely massive and is slipping around a pit eating itself in a never ending ouroboros. People here think that it's very wise; they listen to its sussurating writhings and try to discern meaning from them. Also, if the haven ever comes under significant threat, they believe that the wyrm will arise to defend them.

The ancient temple is built in a glass-floored tunnel, and everyone who passes through can see the enormous creature curling around on itself beneath their feet. The inhabitants, who run market stalls selling keepsakes and soft drugs, don't even remark on it most days.

FACES

- **Felicity the caretaker** is the leader of the witch coven who runs the place and acts on the divine wisdom of the undulating wyrm. Weirdly, this wisdom always seems to benefit her and her order. She and the other witches are lavishly dressed and dripping in jewellery, with well-

appointed apartments in the area above the temple. (We went back and forth on having the person acting as oracle as the caretaker or the rebel, but this seemed more interesting; and we're not entirely sure if she's actually interpreting anything or just making it up as she goes along.)

- **Lech the rebel** is one of a handful of Hounds who work here, overseeing the town defences and training militia groups. Lech was dispatched here after upsetting their superior, and is convinced that the wyrm will not save the populace; they're convinced that it's going to wake up in a year or less and wreck the place. They have the calculations to prove it, which they can show you.
- **Vostair the voice** is a market trader and occasional militiaman. He likes strong drink and strong lovers, prides himself on his sumptuously oiled body hair and has the honour of being one of the least crooked merchants on the temple floor.

ART

People paint and carve wyrms on to everything here. The militia get a twisting snake tattoo to represent their allegiance, and it grows longer for every year they serve. In the houses built into the cavern walls on either side of the gate, the inhabitants daub wyrms on their whitewashed walls in the most extravagant colours they can afford.

PLAYER CHARACTER ROLES

We don't have a set of player characters because this is an example, but we made some up for the purposes of the exercise. They are:

- A Vermissian Knight who escorts valuable cargo through the haven's territory and patrols the borders.
- A Hound who works alongside Lech in training the militia.
- A Witch who's been assigned to Felicity's coven as a glorified serving-girl.
- A Junk Mage who runs an occult tchotchkes stall in the temple market with his snot-nosed cousin.

THREATS

We want to tie this in with the rest of the book, so we decide to draw on the **Cursed** domain and pit an angel against the haven. It approaches, marching stoically from Tier 3 up to the gate. What does it want? That's not entirely clear. It might not even be interested in Wyrmpit itself and only want to use it to access the surface world.

The first game starts with the arrival of a mad-eyed traveller stumbling around Temple Market, begging for someone to escort him to the surface world before the angel arrives.

RULES

The default stress for the haven is D4 on the Tier 1 side and D6 from the temple onwards on the Tier 2 side. We come up with two haunts – Temple Market (Supplies D8) and Sascha, a witch who dabbles in medical experimentation (Blood D6). Finally, the resources available are Cave fungi grown in small farms (D6, Wild) and a variety of souvenirs and tacky art pieces (D6, Haven). If you decide to break into the witches' apartments, their finery is (D8, Haven) and their books of blood-sorcery are (D10, Occult, Beacon).

NAME

After much discussion, we decide to combine two old-fashioned nouns ("Worm" and "Pit", on account of the large worm in the pit at the centre of the town) into a name. We then changed "Worm" to "Wyrm"

because it sounded more appropriate for the weirdness and mystery in the place. It does sound a little like "armpit," but not enough for us to change it.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

What does the angel want? Is the wyrm actually dispensing wisdom or are the witches making it up? When is the wyrm going to wake up, and what's going to be left standing when it does?

And what are those strange markings on the temple walls about, anyway?



RUNNING A HAVEN-BASED GAME

RHYTHM

The typical rhythm of a haven game goes roughly as follows:

1. The haven is under threat.
2. The player characters set out on a delve to find something that will help.
3. They overcome obstacles when they reach the landmark and get what they need.
4. They return to the haven and see how it has grown or changed in their absence.
5. Repeat until the threat is defeated or the haven falls.

You don't have to follow this exactly, of course – that's just the central loop of the game. The details are up to you and your players, whatever feels right at the time and the cruel whims of fallout.

NEIGHBOURS

You've created a haven for the focus of your game; now it's time to sketch out the City Beneath around it. Choose or create three or four landmarks and put them adjacent to the central haven. One of them will have a connection, so reduce the resistance of the delve by half. The others will operate as standard delves.

Each of the landmarks has something that the haven needs (or would at least be beneficial to the inhabitants) and a problem that must be solved before the player characters can access it. Take a look over your haven, paying particular attention to the Threats, and have a think about what would help them negate or overcome the challenges ahead of them. Using Wyrmpit as an example, here are three landmarks broken down by what they can offer and what stands in the delvers' path:

Chollerous, an offshoot of the Church of the Moon Beneath founded by a violent splinter sect, is located on the Tier 1 side of Wyrmpit. They have a strong Hound contingent, so their support in defending the haven could be invaluable. Problem is: someone's stolen the undying martyr they kept locked underneath their sanctum, and the temple is starting to crumble. They think it was an inside job and they need answers.

Hallow, the spiritual and political home of the witches, lies beyond the Tier 2 side of Wyrmpit. The delvers can utilise their power to help defend the haven against the Vermissian or get them onside if they want to oust Felicity and her coven. The witches need a favour: one of the spies they've placed in Felicity's employ has gone rogue, and they want you to track her down and bring her in for questioning. They're not sure which one it is, though. The regular traffic between Hallow and Wyrmpit means that there's a connection established between the two landmarks.

The Red Market, a great shifting war-torn souk devoted to a hungry deity of debt, is accessible through ancient ductways and crawlspaces on the Tier 2 side of Wyrmpit. One of the Incarnadine lords there offers the delvers a chance to access their valuable and occluded trade networks in exchange for helping them carve out some new territory in the market.

MARSH-HALLOW

Here, the bones of saints and martyrs were heaped atop one another until the piles collapsed. Sepulchre on ruined sepulchre was built; mausoleum on top of crumbling mausoleum; gravestones were stacked to make sarcophagi, until the foundations of this place formed a scattershot reliquary. The ghosts of the faithful scratch and moan from beneath every floorboard and slab.

The people here have a thousand minor observances that they go through each day to appease these phantom saints, but it is not a one-way trade. On occasion – especially when the settlement is under threat – the spirits form an amalgam creature of bone and masonry to defend the village, growing to easily twice the height and width of a man.

I am also told that the spirits sometimes do this when the settlement is not under threat, which is significantly less useful.

HAVEN FALLOUT

A haven doesn't accrue stress or have a resistance score. Only the people inside it (and the player characters who support it) do – and ultimately, the haven relies on its inhabitants to exist. When running a haven-based campaign, you can reflect misfortune on the settlement through **Fortune** or **Supplies** fallout marked against the player characters.

You'll probably find that players are keen to establish connections between nearby landmarks – it's assumed that they'll have to undertake each delve at least twice. You'll also probably find that taking these connections away due to Major **Fortune** or **Echo** fallout will really impact them, so make sure to do that at least once – show them that the Heart isn't stable and that any attempt to build something permanent outside of a landmark is futile.

As the game's story focuses around a single threat (or multiple threats, if the players are particularly unlucky), you can make good use of fallout to reflect things getting more dangerous for the haven. We've mentioned a few examples below, but it bears repeating here: fallout becomes a ticking clock, ranging from Minor (rumours about an enemy gathering power) to Major (strikes or raids against your haven) to Critical (the haven is destroyed, or its very existence hangs in the balance).

Below are some example fallout results that you can choose from.

MINOR

APPROACH [FORTUNE]: Whoever or whatever's threatening the haven moves one step closer to fulfilling their goals – maybe they acquire valuable resources, claim some territory or simply walk inexorably closer to the settlement gates. The player characters will see evidence of this or hear tell of it before the session is over. [Immediate]

IN DANGER [FORTUNE]: Someone you care about is in trouble, and it's your fault; or it's at least your job to rescue them. [Immediate]

INFILTRATED [FORTUNE]: Enemy agents have managed to insinuate themselves inside its borders. They will act as spies and saboteurs, and the player characters will have to work hard to root out the threat. [Ongoing]

LACK [SUPPLIES]: The PC has taken too greedily from the supplies that support the haven (food, medicine, water, fuel) and now people have to go without. Next time they arrive in the landmark, they are confronted with the consequences of their actions. [Immediate]

MAJOR

AT THE GATES [FORTUNE]: The haven's adversaries act against the settlement. Most likely this takes the form of a raid for supplies, but it might also be a blockade or an attempt to destroy buildings or resources. [Immediate]

CUT OFF [FORTUNE/SUPPLIES]: One route into the haven has been severed due to environmental change, bad luck or enemy action. Until the characters restore the connection, their spent resources count as one dice size lower when they use haunts in the haven. [Ongoing]

DEAD [FORTUNE]: Someone you care about is dead and it's your fault, or you manage to convince yourself that it's your fault. Or: everyone else thinks it's your fault, despite what actually happened. If they're a bond, lose them; if they run a haunt, either remove it from the haven or halve its dice size as unskilled apprentices take over. [Immediate]

INFORMATION LEAK [FORTUNE]: Spies inside the haven have been reporting on your movements, and when you attempt to pull off something difficult (securing a rare resource, establishing a trade route, repelling attackers) you notice that your plan has been undermined by their actions. The next action you make after discovering the subterfuge is **Dangerous**; after that, assuming you survive, you'll need to come up with a new plan. [Immediate]

SABOTAGE [FORTUNE]: A vital element (probably a haunt, a defence or a device that the haven relies on) has been sabotaged – maybe beyond repair. [Immediate]

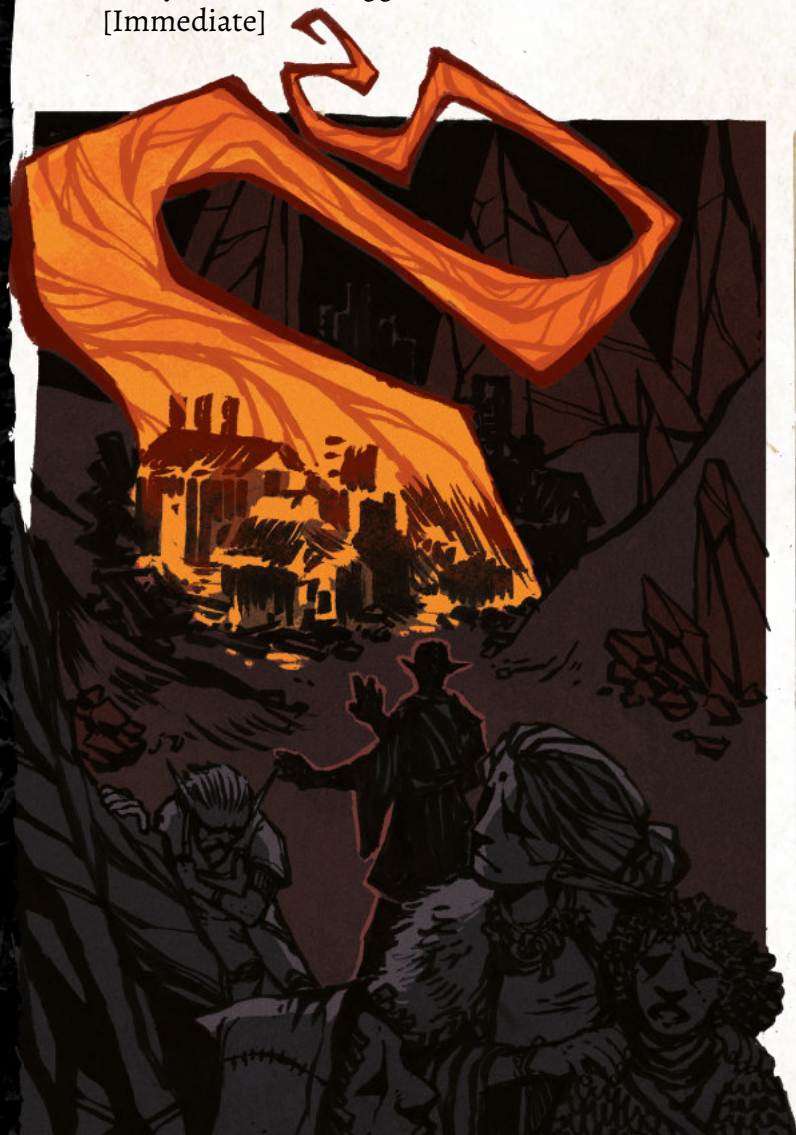
SEEKING SHELTER [FORTUNE]: An influx of refugees from a destroyed nearby haven stretches the settlement to the limit. Tempers flare and accusations of theft fly. Can the player characters stop the situation developing into mob justice, or at least pin the blame on a disposable scapegoat? [Immediate]

CRITICAL

FALLEN [FORTUNE]: The haven is so damaged and the people so demoralised (or dead) that it can no longer function as a settlement. It is abandoned, and though it could be rebuilt in future, protecting the refugees and finding safety is a much bigger immediate concern. [Immediate]

HUNGER. [FORTUNE]: The haven has run out of food; people are leaving, and those who stay fight over what few scraps remain. You can't use any haunts and bonds are either missing or function at half efficiency (marking two stress for every point of stress removed from your character). Unless you do something soon, the haven will cease to function. [Ongoing]

KILLER [FORTUNE]: Maybe it was a stray shot or some tragic magical backlash – or perhaps you meant to do it and choked the life out of them with your bare hands. Anyway: someone you care about is dead and you did it. Now you have to evade detection, hide the body and come up with an alibi lest you're hung in the town square at the next bell. [Immediate]



OUR LADY OF PERAMBULATION CHURCH

If a nomadic life is sacred to you, where do you congregate to worship? Apparently, you pick up your church and carry it around.

The followers of Our Lady Of Perambulation number in the hundreds, and they are always on an endless pilgrimage to nowhere in particular. The most devoted are permitted to carry their high church, an angular building made of wood and bone. They move it throughout the undercity on a route determined by a mad oracle who sits, wreathed in narcotic smoke, in the central chamber of the church.

The faithful offer lodging in the back rooms of this church. It is cheap and the worshippers are friendly enough, but the pungent smoke creeps in everywhere and their perpetual warbling hymnal (which I am told has been continually sung for the last twelve years) can set one's teeth on edge.

HAVEN BEATS

You may want to give players the option for haven-specific beats in addition to beats associated with their calling. Unlike calling beats, these don't give access to advances when they're achieved – instead, they give access to a new bond or remove stress from an existing bond.

Make three or four haven beats when you make the settlement, keep them visible to all players (either in the centre of the table or in a shared document/webpage) and let them mix and match. You can update haven beats as you play to reflect the changing state of the haven.

This is a great way to direct your players and reward them mechanically for interacting with the haven; and if they're regularly coming home and offloading stress onto their bonds, they're going to need to use them.

For more information on bonds and how they acquire stress, see *Heart* p. 98.

Here are some ideas for haven beats:

- ☐ Repel attackers who want to steal valuable resources from the haven
- ☐ Listen to the Rebel's concerns and offer them your support
- ☐ Build up the haven's defences
- ☐ Hunt down a murderer who's hiding in the haven
- ☐ Act against the Rebel on behalf of the Caretaker
- ☐ Rescue the Voice when they're in trouble
- ☐ Bring new inhabitants to the haven
- ☐ Rebuild the temple in the centre of town
- ☐ Evacuate the survivors of an attack
- ☐ Acquire materials to reinforce the town's wards against the Heart
- ☐ Lay a ghost to rest
- ☐ Steal supplies for the town's militia from some dodgy mercenaries
- ☐ Redeem old Farmer Asharam's soul
- ☐ Go on a nice date with someone
- ☐ Create some communal art that adds to the haven's appearance

TYPHON

Legends tell of a portal to a dark and cruel dimension beneath the inn at the centre of Typhon. It is a place of writhing horror and infinite monsters, where the greatest warriors test both their strength of arm and strength of spirit. It is said that it is from here that pitchkin crawl; here that the Great Minotaur dwells; here that the restless guardians of the dead, bejewelled and gold-clad, keep watch over the slumbering bodies of undying deities. The innkeeper whispers that treasures beyond the ken of man, elf or gnoll await those brave enough to venture into the tar-black labyrinth.

It is all bunkum.

The inn at Typhon is just that: an inn, perhaps with a slightly larger-than-normal basement. The owner is a liar who is quite happy to get foolhardy adventurous types drunk off their heads and send them downstairs to be robbed by six of his distant cousins. Besides, the rooms are overpriced and the beer is watery.



ANGELS

Angels are the emissaries of the Heart Itself. They are considered by many to be the most dangerous creatures of the City Beneath, and they are so rare that they are spoken of as legends. The Heart moves at a geographic scale and views the people who dwell within it as irritating but ultimately unimportant parasites. It's only when the inhabitants break one of its inscrutable rules that it acts directly.

When you kill an angel – carving open the uncanny cocoon of flesh that barely contains its roiling unreality and spilling its hissing blood on the ground – it does not die. It is reborn miles beneath you, in some distant stone womb. You cannot fight an angel forever, because it has forever and you do not. The best you can hope for is to gain an understanding of what it wants by interpreting the gutted havens it leaves in its wake and change your behaviour appropriately.

But people are stubborn. Perhaps you can out-kill an angel until it gets bored, or until whatever intelligence governs it decides to try something else; maybe you can hide from it, or convince it to go somewhere else instead of your family home.

In this chapter, you'll find four different variations of angel: three that are less dangerous than the default Angel in the core book, and one which is significantly more dangerous. They are artfully described by the mad travel writer Gris Hanneman, and as the Heart has the trick of changing the imagined into the real, it is hard to say and entirely immaterial whether he was making it all up.



BLOSSOM ANGEL

"Blossom", as in "bloom", as in "unfold:" a dreadful thing to witness. It is more suited to life on the sea bed than on dry land; a singular lump of muscle in a slug-like configuration, without eye or mouth or ear. Blind and furious, it knows only that it cannot be where it is, and must instead travel towards where it will be: a destination whispered sleepwise into it by the Convocation. That sole thought echoes around its blunt and cavernous mind.

It propels itself by ejecting fleshy hooks from its central mass at tremendous velocity; these hooks then anchor onto the surrounding terrain and provide purchase for it to yank itself onwards. It is fastest in tunnels and confined spaces: it seems to fly through the air within them, eerily silent save for the ft-thunk of hooks and the twitching song of contracting muscle fibres. On open terrain it is slower, and makes do with writhing on the ground like an animate tongue cut from a man's head - but it dislikes open spaces, and even seems to be hurt by them. It bleeds and squirms most unpleasantly when confronted with the open air of a large cavern, and seeks shelter somewhere more suited to its method of perambulation.

When it reaches its target location, it will burst into a storm of hooks, piercing anyone close by and pinning their corpses in place. It attaches itself to the walls, ceiling and floor before tensing every muscle and hanging, quivering, in the air.

Then: it blossoms.

A rapturous thing, this angel; it unfolds with the promises of the Convocation, heralding the arrival of a new crimson world to supercede the dull plane on which we fritter away our handfuls of moments. It expands from within like a bonemarrow flower, flooding the space with new fecundity: walls of meat and teeth, a heavy pulse in the darkest lizard recesses of the mind, an interstitial roar of birth. The original place is no more, save for the echoes of a structure here or there. It is replaced with something sharp and wet and new.

NAMES: Synsthreethseis, Culcationarian, Geoch

DESCRIPTORS: Inky-black and hard to look at, as though there's too much condensed into a singular space; Quivering and lost, clawing apart a stone wall to escape an open space; Lowering itself down a long shaft above a populated haven

MOTIVATION: To travel through tunnels and enclosed spaces in order to reach a designated landmark, then embed itself in the walls to blossom

DIFFICULTY: Risky

RESISTANCE: 25

PROTECTION: 2

RESOURCES: Fistfuls of sopping protoplasm (D8, Cursed, Mobile)

EQUIPMENT: Black bone hooks (Kill D6, Piercing, Point-Blank)

SPECIAL: The first time you see a Blossom angel, roll **Endure+Cursed** and mark D6 stress to Fortune on a failure as it projects hooks from itself that limit your movement and pull you off balance.

If you can reach the "top" of a Blossom angel, you can attack the exposed organ that conjures the Heart Itself. Such attacks negate the creature's **Protection**.

If the Blossom angel manages to hook itself in place and expand to its full size, the landmark it occupies gains the **Cursed** and **Warren** domains and loses any existing domains.

DOMAINS: Cursed, Warren.

FALLOUT: HOOKED [Minor, Blood/Fortune]

Multiple barbed spears of bone plunge through your armour and latch into your flesh: you are pulled towards the roiling muscular centre of the angel and are unable to flee. In this position, the point-blank tag on the angel's bone hooks is always considered to be active. An ally can free you by hacking away the fleshy tethers; this inflicts no stress to the angel but removes this fallout from your character. [Immediate, Ongoing]

CACOPHONY ANGEL

The Cacophony angel stands twenty feet tall, bedecked in shimmering chitin. Unlike many of its kin, its approach is not one of a slow surreal unpicking of the real, but a bellowing roar that rattles the very foundations of a haven.

It would seem it is designed (if "designed" is a word that can be applied to the Convocation; perhaps "dreamed" is more apt, or perhaps our minds cannot fathom the actual word and attempting to understand their machinations is fruitless to any but the most brilliant) for direct assault. During the invasion of the Heart half a century ago, the aelfir commanders of the Damned 33rd regiment brought their strange magic to bear against the Convocation's monstrous fruit: humming lanterns that projected reality-stabilising patterns of glyph and sigil, razorsharp songs that pierced the brains of their troops to make them fearless and more besides. They began to take ground; but this imbalance could not be allowed to continue.

The Cacophony angel's dozen mouths herald its arrival with a shuddering song, at once atonal and harmonic, that makes men's noses bleed and their vision swim. When it makes contact with those it was fashioned to destroy, they are often already scattered and disorganised; one in three does not survive hearing the song, simply collapsing into mad spasm.

This brute-force ram of a creature proceeds to smash apart defences with ease and rip regiments to shreds. Even sustained rifle fire cannot overwhelm it, and offensive sorcery is all but impossible thanks to its unceasing song, which twists and rakes the brains of those who hear it.

In its wake it leaves carnage unthought of, even by those who have witnessed the effects of other angels. Where it touches the earth, the ground is scarred brimstone-yellow and smokes perpetually. Buildings are reduced to splinters and dust; defenders are pulped to paste by its fistlike appendages, each the size of a fully-grown man. Where its kin move through the Heart with alien grace and reshape the world around them, the Cacophony angel's rampages are direct displays of force that I speculate are to show those who would trifle with the Convocation that it can fight on the invader's terms.

NAMES: Hymnal, Bray, Tumultuan

DESCRIPTORS: Wrenching a pillar out of the ground and hurling it into a group of defenders; Clambering atop a belltower and howling a song of endings; Moving with an inhuman grace, in time to a distant drum-beat

MOTIVATION: To utterly smash apart defences, reduce the works of mortals to ruin, show dominance and destroy everything in its path

DIFFICULTY: Dangerous

RESISTANCE: 30

PROTECTION: 5

RESOURCES: Cracked armour plating (D8 Cursed, confers the **BLOCK** tag when fashioned into armour)

EQUIPMENT: Calcified bone mauls (Kill D12)

SPECIAL: When you hear the song of the Cacophony angel, roll **Endure+Cursed** to withstand it; if you fail, mark D8 stress to **Blood**.

DOMAINS: Cursed, Desolate.

LOCOS ANGEL

The Convocation is curious. Our world is unlike theirs: it is cold and dark and strange to them, a reality viewed through smoked glass which they struggle to comprehend with their alien senses. This is why the Logos was born: a living, ambulatory sense organ.

I am not entirely sure what the Logos looks like, for when it is observed, it becomes less real. It is so scarcely on our plane of existence that a small group of people looking at (or for) it cause it to stop physically manifesting altogether. It has a location, but not a presence; its very existence defies understanding.

But, from what I glimpsed during our expedition into an abandoned village and the eyewitness accounts taken from survivors, here is a rough outline of its appearance. It is small for an angel - roughly the size of a horse - and constructed of many clawed, bony limbs. On the underside of the creature, a huge tongue-like protuberance hangs twitching and pallid; I do not believe that it is capable of retracting it.

This angel, unlike others, hides. It secretes itself in basements, attics, abandoned rooms or on derelict rooftops, and waits for a person to approach. People are its absolute favourite thing. When one falls asleep near the angel, it will unfold itself and creep ever so quietly over them. It will drip a sticky, soporific fluid from its maw and render the unfortunate target unable to think straight or move with efficiency. Then, slowly, inquisitively and completely non-maliciously, it will press down its tongue and taste.

I believe it tastes in a way quite unlike us. It tastes the entirety of a person from their skin alone, absorbing a world of information from their sweat. It tastes their past, their family and companions, the fears they won't admit even to themselves and the terrible arc of misfortune and obsession that brought them to live in the Heart and fall asleep in some abandoned building.

After a few sessions of tasting the angel moves on to a different target, or perhaps a different haven entirely. But the victim (if they're aware of the situation) has the uncanny sensation of being seen in a way that they have never before been seen: the semi-conscious realisation that someone is staring at them, but writ large. The Heart knows their name.

NAMES: Itch, Restrict, Yondarian

DESCRIPTORS: Folded up inside a cupboard, entirely filling the space and waiting until you fall asleep; Charging towards a marketplace to get enough people to notice it so it can become invisible and intangible; Licking empty bookshelves to try and absorb the memories of the books

MOTIVATION: To taste everything about you and then move on to the next person; to get away from danger and hide until things blow over

DIFFICULTY: Standard

RESISTANCE: 16

PROTECTION: The protection value of the angel is equal to the number of people who are aware of its location or actively hunting for it; if it reaches 6 or more, it can no longer be seen or interacted with.

RESOURCES: Mind-dulling chemicals (D8, Cursed, Harmful. Use on a Mend Blood or Mind check to roll with mastery.)

EQUIPMENT: Soporific spit (Kill D4, Ranged, Point-Blank); Perfectly-timed pounce (Kill D10, One-Shot. This weapon inflicts stress to Echo.)

SPECIAL: The first time you witness a particular Logos angel, roll **Endure+Cursed**; on a failure, mark D6 stress to **Echo** as it looks back.

DOMAINS: Cursed, Haven.

FALLOUT: NIGHT TERRORS [Minor, Echo/Fortune] The next time you wake up, your head aches as though you've been drugged and your bedclothes are covered in weird, sticky spoor. You have been tasted by a Logos angel, but it isn't done just yet. All actions against the angel become Risky until you get a good night's sleep where it doesn't pay you a visit.

FALLOUT: SPIT [Minor, Blood/Fortune] You catch some of the angel's dripping fluid on your skin or lips and your vision swims. Using Hunt or Evade actions becomes Risky until this fallout is removed. [Ongoing]

FALLOUT: KNOWN [Critical, Blood/Echo] The Logos angel absorbs the entirety of you and passes that data back to the Heart Itself. The next angel you meet will kill you and you will be unable to harm it in any way; at best, you might be able to use your death as a distraction. [Ongoing]

PENUMBRA ANGEL

I spoke with the Penumbra angel. It kissed me with lips of glass and spoke riddles under my skin. It whispered to me of the Convocation and spoke words like silver scalpels that slit me open to a new and staggering world; words that exposed the naked bones of me to a truth the likes of which I had never before experienced; words that echo in my head still; words that phantom-fizz at my fingertips and beg to be written.

(I cannot write them. I am clay and dirt, a wretch of a thing. My mind is puddle-deep next to the roaring, tempestuous ocean of the Convocation.)

It met with me in High Rise during my time with the Swanfall Cult. It walked amongst the people of the haven as though it were one of them: it wore the skin of a drow, but to my experienced eye it seemed a poor fit - as though the creature underneath were pulsing against it, just outside the realm of normal sight. I followed it to an abandoned apartment two storeys below the great fire on the central structure, and it was waiting for me.

The Penumbra angel spoke my name like burning phosphor; not the name on the front of this book, not the childlike assembly of syllables that I respond to, but my true name. It alone has seen me. It told me that it was not part of the Convocation, but that it was the Convocation. It showed me, peeling my skin apart like paper to reveal the glistening muscle underneath, that I was the Convocation, too. Or rather, that I could be; that the process had already begun.

NAMES: Penumbra – each of them is named the same, and may all be extrusions of the same creature

DESCRIPTORS: Hovering a quarter-inch off the ground, as if no-one would notice; Has eyes that change colour every time you look away; Terrifying a pack of feral dogs into cowering obedience by their mere presence

MOTIVATION: To contact someone the Heart has marked as a potential recruit and steer them towards revelations

DIFFICULTY: Risky

RESISTANCE: 12

PROTECTION: 1 (in humanoid form), 3 (uncloaked)

RESOURCES: Person-skin suit (D10, Occult, Taboo. Made from a real person. If you wear it, you look and sound just like the person.)

EQUIPMENT: Ruinous shadow (Kill D8, Brutal, Obscuring); Words of power (Kill D8, Ranged, Piercing. This attack inflicts stress to Mind.)

SPECIAL: You can witness the Penumbra angel in its cloaked form with no ill effects, although a successful **Discern+Cursed** check will reveal that it's not actually a person. If it chooses to unveil itself (usually in response to attack or discovery), make an **Endure+Cursed** check to withstand the shock and mark D8 stress to **Echo** on a failure.

DOMAINS: Cursed, Occult, Haven.

FALLOUT: FALSE BLESSING [Minor, Mind] You are convinced that someone in your immediate vicinity is a Penumbra angel, ripe and riddled with secrets of the world beyond. You might even be correct; their protestations at not being an angel could just be another test. [Immediate]

FALLOUT: BLESSED [Major, Echo] You are approached by a Penumbra angel and your mind is forcefully expanded with visions of the Heart Itself. As long as you possess this fallout, you roll with mastery when interacting with angels or investigating their whereabouts. If you mark stress as a result, the dice size is increased by one step. [Ongoing]

GRIS HANNEMAN'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

What follows is a list of equipment used by Gris Hanneman (or equipment that his book claims he used). Stats are included for the fictional and the actual version of items where appropriate – the artefact mentioned in the book is displayed first, and the less-impressive true item is shown second.

My primary mission is to document angels, not hunt them, but I am well aware of the need for a measure of self-defence. To that end I have brought with me a pistol of fine make: a gift from my father, himself an explorer, who granted it to me on his deathbed when he realised that it was time to pass on the torch. Crafted by the gunsmiths of House Gryndel, this pistol boasts a prodigious punch (with appropriate accompanying recoil) and never let me down - until it was stolen by a sticky-fingered wretch during my time in The God of Corpses.

THE HANNEMAN FAMILY PISTOL

Kill D8, Ranged, Reload, Good-Quality

THE PISTOL THAT GRIS PULLED FROM A CORPSE'S HANDS IN REDCAP GROVE

Kill D8, Ranged, One-shot
Confers **Knack: Robbery**.

During my time in the Heart, I developed a concoction with which to treat my ammunition so the bullets would better deter angels from further attack. It consisted mainly of materials harvested from the creatures themselves (or the cosmic spoor left in their wake) rendered into a powder. This is then added to the lead during the bullet-making process.

ANGEL BULLETS

As weapon, **Limited 6**.

When the user inflicts stress on an angel, the angel's **Protection** value is not subtracted from the stress.

MIND-SHARPENING PILLS FOUND IN HANNEMAN'S LODGINGS

Limited 6.

Inflicts D6 stress to **Mind** when taken, but confers **Knack: Locate Angels** until the end of the session.

A rogue blood-witch who had turned her back on the backstabbing sorcerers of Hallow taught me the secret of making scrying-bones during our brief (but eventful) affair. My own set of bones incorporated occult findings outside her sphere of understanding; I believe this is what set her against me and precipitated her departure.

THE FINDING BONES

Delve D8, Wyrd, Excellent Quality

A TANGLE OF BLOODSTAINED BIRD-BONES AND STRING

Delve D4

Confers Knack: Breaking and Entering.

I lost three fingers from my left hand following an altercation with some ne'er-do-wells. Luckily, I was taken in by a Heartsblood enclave and shown their strange healing arts. Strangest of all was the Mother of Meat: a jar of writhing, semi-living mince that is mixed with plant matter and used as a sort of poultice to be applied to wounds. My fingers grew back much stronger than before, though I could no longer bear to look upon their fingerprints.

THE MOTHER OF MEAT

Mend Blood D8, Potent, Wyrd.

Once per session, use it to remove a Minor or Major **Blood** fallout; the person healed marks D6 stress to **Echo**.

GRIS HANNEMAN'S FINGERS, CONSPICUOUSLY MISSING FROM HIS HAND WHEN HE WAS LAST SEEN

Delve D6

Three fingers that point in the direction of the nearest angel, haven and narcotic in the surrounding area.

It was in High Rise where I met my companion Bociferous - a dog of some kind, or perhaps a distant relative of one. Bociferous had acquired the traits of the albino crows that perch on every railing and window sill in the place: yellow-white feathers, pinkish eyes and a beak. He retained a dog's general form and subversive demeanour in spite of his avian mutations, and his feathers gave him the ability to glide (though not to achieve true flight). I adored Bociferous, and it was with real, genuine sadness that I ate him when our party ran out of food and disposable team members.

PROUD BOCIFEROUS, CANID CORVIDAE

Delve D8, Good Quality

WRETCHED BOCIFEROUS, A MANGY HALF-DOG THAT BELIEVES IT'S A CROW

Delve D6, Expensive (in that it eats your supplies when you're not looking)

SANCTUM

**BUILD FANTASTICAL, TRAGIC SETTLEMENTS
UNDER THREAT FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT**

**DO YOUR LEVEL BEST TO DEFEND THEM AND KEEP
THE PEOPLE INSIDE ALIVE AND PROSPEROUS**

**WATCH, BROKEN, AS AN EMISSARY OF A VAST ALIEN MIND
ARRIVES AND TEARS APART THE WALLS LIKE PAPER**

Sanctum is a sourcebook for the *Heart* RPG. Inside, you'll find a guide to building havens with your group to create the basis for an exciting campaign. You'll also find advice on running haven-based campaigns, special fallout results that reflect your settlement's trials and tribulations, and ways to create and reinforce bonds with the people within.

Finally, you'll find rules for four new types of angel, the fell-handed messengers of the Heart Itself which infiltrate and smash apart havens. You'll also enjoy in-character ramblings on them from washed-up pulp fiction author Gris Hannemann who, potentially, invented them to sell more copies of his books. But they're real now.

A copy of Heart: The City Beneath is required to use this book.

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